

LUTHERAN WOMAN TODAY

JUNE
1989

**Affirming
Individual Worth**

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For Growth in Faith and Mission

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Editor's Notes

ace and peace to all of you in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ," began Wyvetta Bullis as she spoke to participants at the ELCA writers workshop. Her message, "I Am with You to Deliver" (found on page 10 of this issue) powerfully affirms our worth as Christ and challenges us to use our gifts in Christ's service.

Last month we began to examine logically the constitutional principles of Women of the ELCA. This month we focus on the principle of "affirmation of individual worth," and recognize that "each person is created in God's image and uses her varied gifts in diverse ministries. . . ."

Jesus came "in order that you might have life—life in all its fullness" (John 10:10). Anne Ellis in her article, "That You Might Have Life," affirms those who struggle to be taken seriously, and affirms those who work so that all of God's children might live a life of fullness. "Listening Post" (p. 37) we find a nation in communication.

A life filled with Christ will show "faith hardiness" discussed in "Faith and Care" (p. 28). On page 30 Granville Westberg shows how a parish can help a congregation commit mind, body and spirit for true life in Christ.

There are evils that keep us from living and being affirmed. Racism, sexism, classism. Injustice, intolerance. Those who victimize and those who support victimization with apathy. Anne Ellis's article picks up the problems of domestic violence and the global oppression of women. The author of "Private

Fears, Silent Tears" (p. 16) tells her true story of the lasting pain of sexual abuse.

Affirmation is one of those "simple" ideas of Christ that seems incredibly difficult to live out in the world—but as Christians we are asked to try and to struggle. We are asked to remember our own worth—and that of our neighbors—as children of God.

"The Lord bless you and keep you. . . ." The Rev. Howard Hinkeldey uses a benediction to close "Stephanie" (p. 47). His moving eulogy of a 16-year-old girl, a person of great individual worth, touches our hearts.

Grace and peace to *you* from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. You, a child of God, made in God's image. You are chosen. Your ministries and gifts are an integral part of the body of Christ. Through your days, in your ministries, using your gifts, may God bless you and keep you and be gracious unto you, and give you peace.

Sue Edison-Swift

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

On Our Cover

Lorna White, 26, lives in Minneapolis, Minnesota. She attends the School for Social Development and works as a maid through the school's job training program.

Lorna enjoys taking dance classes, coloring, shopping, visiting with friends, swimming and playing the piano.

LETTERS

Lent for Sale?

About the same time I read "Lent—Not for Sale" (February) I saw an ad in our local paper for a "Lenten Perm Special." I sent Karen Melang's article to the owner of the hair salon with a kindly note to read the article and realize the significance of Lent.

*Caroline Hansen
Little Falls, Minnesota*

March Issue

Thanks for putting a twinkle in your magazine and in our lives via the issue on "Spirituality and Playfulness." Keep us leaping, loving, living our faith.

*Connie Bliss
Van Nuys, CA*

"Spirituality and Playfulness" is a real delight. I especially enjoyed "A Woman and Her Toys." As a senior citizen I find that my adult "toys" include: garden tools, Bible, ice skates, swimsuit, piano keys, knitting needles, sewing machine, cookbooks, bicycle, typewriter, and American history, to name a few.

*Agnes M. Oud
Moscow, Idaho*

Resource Book

We're told that the 1990 Bible study will be offered in three four-month parts. Will this mean three different resource books for 1990?

*Marjory Bowers
Hudson, Iowa*

[One resource book will cover all 1990. For more information, see page 46—ED.]

Bible Study

Our ladies feel that the Bible Study, "A Light to My Path," is too difficult to comprehend. I realize the writers want to challenge us but it is like we have been challenged to climb Mt. Everest! Are we alone in this opinion?

*Hylon Baker
Castalia, Ohio*

[Letters to the editor received so far indicate that many people share your view that "A Light to My Path—A Study of the Psalms" is difficult and lengthy study. There are also a number who comment that though the preparation for the study has been a struggle, the group discussions it generates have been insightful and helpful.]

The Rev. Ivis LaRiviere-Mestre, director of educational resources for Women of the ELCA, suggests that study leaders ask participants what questions proved most interesting and fruitful to them, and focus on those during the group session.

Pastor LaRiviere-Mestre is appreciative of the specific comments she's been receiving about the Bible study, and is using this information as she briefs future Bible-study writers.—ED.

CONTRIBUTORS

Leo Ellis ("That You Might Live Life") lives in New York City with his wife, Mary. A free-lance writer, especially of children's fiction, she co-edits the newsletter *Dateline: Nebraska*. Ellis formerly served as director of interpretation for the Lutheran Church in America's Division for Mission in North America.



Wetia Bullock, in her words of information to candidates at a multicultural workshop ("I Am with You to Deliver You . . .") speaks to all of us about our call from God. Coordinating director for budget, personnel and office management of ELCA's Division for Congregational Life, Bullock is also a lecturer at Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago and cohost of SAIC, the ELCA video magazine.



Member of the three-woman team that helped plan the first issues of LWT, **Dorothy Chapman** reflects on her use of the magazine since 1971 in "LWT: Outside the Circle." Chapman is director of instructional materials development for American Lutheran Service, an educational products publisher. She is a member of Christ the King Lutheran Church, St. Paul, Minnesota.



Dr. E. Westberg, well-known pastor, chaplain and educator, speaks out for an exciting health care future in the church. Dr. Westberg, of Downers Grove, Illinois, is now retired, and serves as a consultant on the parish nurse concept. Many Lutherans know Westberg as the author of *Good Grief*, a classic book on coping with loss.



Brief Prayers on News Items

Sonia Groenewold

ELCA faces social issues

The ELCA Commission for Church in Society is finishing work on a document that will spell out procedures to be used as it develops ELCA social statements and messages. The commission is seeking participation throughout the church as it prepares these documents on contemporary issues.

Guide the church, O Lord, as it speaks to the perplexing and complex issues in our world. May these documents be responsible and responsive to your message and your people.

Seminary in India studies exploitation

Gurukul Lutheran Theological College and Research Institute in Madras, India, is offering coursework addressing oppression. Women, Dalits (outcasts) and tribal people especially suffer oppression, discrimination and exploitation. Structures within society, and even within the church, contribute to the oppression.

Lord, make us aware of the many forms of oppression all around us. Let us not contribute to our own, or to others', oppression.

Youth are active in camping ministries

Renovating homes. Backpacking. Sailing. Canoeing. White-water rafting. A pilgrimage to Mexico. These and other programs for young people are some of many offered by ELCA camping ministries. They provide times for spiritual, emotional and physical growth for individuals and communities.

Lord, bless these ministries and those who participate. Help us to value our youth as the church of today—not only as the church of tomorrow.

Baltic churches experience change

Change is taking place within Lutheran churches in Estonia and Latvia, perhaps due to the glasnost experienced in the Soviet Union. The new openness is encouraging people to come back to the churches, and many young people are looking to the churches for help with life's deeper questions.

Lord of the church, let your Spirit continue to blow fresh breezes into these churches.

Read your daily newspaper and build a prayer list to be revised as needs change.

Sonia C. Groenewold is news editor of The Lutheran.

"That You Might Have Life"

Anne Leo Ellis



have come

order that you might have life—

e in all its fullness."—John 10:10b

he battered wife struggling for esteem;

he artist who finds that creativity in its many forms—is the key to fulfilling life;

he leaders of a Namibian national women's group who are out- raged at the government's use of a dangerous contraceptive—one that is used only on Black women, and without their knowledge and con- sent;

he homeless woman in New York who sits, dignity intact, her clothes folded neatly about her, re- sisting the menace and disorder of the public shelter;

he college woman who faces a daunting number of possibilities, choices and options in a complex world;

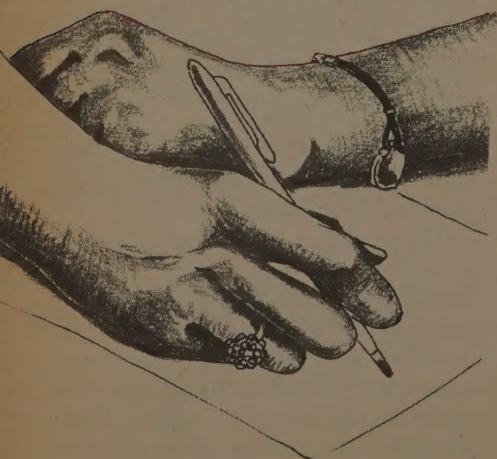
he young mother who is growing in faith and confidence through women's Bible study and support group.

Each of these women, presented with vastly different options, seeks to affirm her own selfhood, or that of other women, and seeks to be perceived as a serious, contributing human being . . . a child of God made in God's own image. Such affirmation of individual worth should be possible for all women. Sadly, however, the need for the affirmation of women and the valuing of their contributions is still too little understood or recognized by many. Sometimes the problem is not even recognized by those men and women who are themselves oppressed or personally unfulfilled.

Throughout recorded history, women—and men—have striven for some semblance of freedom, justice and dignity. We have sought to develop that within ourselves which makes each of us unique. On many levels, in every culture, that struggle continues to show itself—



The themes of freedom, justice and peace are central to the gospel of Jesus Christ.



sometimes most amazingly and most courageously—in the face of unspeakable oppression and dehumanization.

But for women, there has always been that extra layer of suppression, often imposed by deeply rooted cultural misperceptions, that women are not, somehow, quite as full human, quite as worthwhile as men.

Undeniably, taken as a group, Western middle-class women have it the best. In the United States, women's organized struggles for individual affirmation and societal recognition of worth have led to astounding changes in the last 20 years. (As church people we need only look at the growing number of women on the clergy roster for proof!).

While there is a whole list of issues—equal pay for equal work, readily available and reliable day care, sexual harassment on the job, the stresses of parenting and care building—that still need attention, Western women are nevertheless among the fortunate few, largely protected by the law, with increasing opportunities to develop their skills and talents to the fullest. Even as we continue our own struggle, however, we have a responsibility toward the millions of sisters with a far longer road to travel.

We know, however, that even many women in North America "working outside the home" is so often routine and unrewarding, and that, across the board, pay for women is still far less than that for equivalent tasks done by men.

In too many situations women work in demeaning situations, on minimum wage or less, with few prospects for the future. The truly desperate, caught in a cycle of pove-

which they imagine no escape, little possibility for affirming worth as a child of God.

And to that the most recent age in our super-rich nation: thousands of women, usually with children, who have been forced to the ranks of the homeless. It is testament to the human spirit that so many women in even these worst-case situations manage to endure, and to prevail. But it is true that many more die a spiritual death, victims to the cruelty of their survival.

Perhaps most crushing to a woman's self-esteem is violence directed against her in the home. Domestic violence is rife in the United States, it draws no distinctions of class, race, or economic status. It can be a constant threat, a reality for women rich and poor, White, African-American, Asian, Hispanic, Native American. In her book *Battered Women: From a Theology of Suffering to an Ethic of Empowerment*, M. K. Bussert, an Evangelical Lutheran Church in America pastor from Minnesota, poses a powerful challenge to all church people that they be aware of this evil in their own communities and, yes, in their own Lutheran congregations.

And what of women in other cultures? In many nations, freedom for women—as a political and social issue—is still in its infancy. Even in countries where laws for women's rights are on the books, the gulf between stated goals and realities is staggering.

A vivid example is India. In this nation—a signer of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a member of the United Nations, the largest democracy in the world, the largest democracy in the Far East—there is an increase in

THE WORD OF GOD AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The American Bible Society (ABS) has produced a 70-page paperback booklet, with a helpful study guide, that probes the connections between God's Word and will for humankind, and human rights.

Titled *Life in All Its Fullness: The Word of God and Human Rights*, this resource was produced by ABS for the Human Rights Office of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., to mark the 40th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The booklet may be used for individual or group study, for discussion or meditation. To secure a single copy of the booklet, send a self-addressed 5" x 7" envelope with 65¢ in postage stamps affixed, to:

Fullness Booklet
Lutheran Woman Today
8765 W. Higgins Road
Chicago, IL, 60631.

Individual copies will be sent while supply lasts.



**For women
in the West
the challenge is
connectedness—
connectedness
with each other
here at home,
and with women
throughout the
world.**



wife burnings has reached such levels in recent years that the Indian women's organizations have demanded an official investigation. And while laws protecting women do exist, consistent enforcement of them is almost impossible, because of the rootedness of Hindu religious beliefs and because of a culture that traditionally has put women down.

Pramila Dandavate, a pioneer in the Indian women's rights movement, speaks frankly: "We are a feudal society," she says. "Basically we don't believe that people are equal. Our education system does not teach respect for women" (*New York Times*, January 15, 1989).

India stands as a graphic example of what can happen even in a society that is in many ways enlightened. Often the degradation of women is so deeply rooted in a culture that everyone—even the oppressed woman herself—accepts it as a given.

It is clear that even a document as influential as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which celebrated its 40th anniversary in 1988, is no guarantee of protection. Those concerned about the lives of women must be vigilant. The declaration, deeply grounded in the beliefs of the Judeo-Christian tradition, upholds the themes of freedom, justice and peace that are central to the gospel of Jesus Christ. [See "The Word of God and Human Rights," page 7.]

The preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that the

"recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family

the foundation of freedom,
justice and peace in the world."

Women spells out these rights and
demands in 30 carefully crafted ar-
ticles. The United Nations Commis-
sion on the Status of Women works
tirelessly to assure that women's
rights are implemented in all the
member nations. Nevertheless, the
gap between human-rights endeavors
and the daily reality for most wom-
en throughout the world are still
decades apart.

For women in the West our chal-
lenge is connectedness—connect-
ing with each other here at
home, and with women throughout
the world. How can this be accom-
plished?

By remaining alert, sensitive,
well-informed, interested;

By confronting and overcoming
our own fears and prejudices and
looking beyond the borders of our
lives and circles of acquaint-
ances and friends;

By having the courage to ask for
help, if we ourselves are in need or
danger;

By caring and by taking appro-
priate action when needed: a phone
call, a visit, an act of friendship, a
show of support or political advo-
cacy;

By selecting a special focus in or-
der to be most effective.

For Lutheran women, intelligent
and committed support of our sis-
ters in Namibia immediately comes
to mind—especially since a "Cam-
paign in Support of the Women of
Namibia" is a joint effort of Women
of the ELCA and the ELCA's Com-
mission for Women. (For more in-
formation, write: Joan Pope, Direc-
tor of Peace with Justice, Women of
the ELCA, or call 1-800-638-3522.)

Such acts take openness, imagi-
nation, initiative, effort—and
prayer. They are important and
meaningful ways of reaching out to
one another as Christ commanded
us to do, striving for that day when
all of God's children—women and
men alike—will be able to live "life
in all its fullness." ■

TO LEARN MORE . . .

*Human Rights: Questions
and Answers*, United Nations:
New York, 1987.

*Human Rights: The Interna-
tional Bill of Human Rights*,
United Nations: New York,
1988.

[The above items may be or-
dered free from Public Inquir-
ies Unit, DPI, Room GA-57,
United Nations, New York,
10017.]

*Battered Women: From a The-
ology of Suffering to an Ethic
of Empowerment*, by Pastor
Joy M. K. Bussert (Lutheran
Church in America, 1986,
\$3.50.) Contains helpful, prac-
tical suggestions for such em-
powering. Available from
Augsburg Fortress, order
number 40-1-9050.

I Am with You to Deliver You . .



"Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me." John 15:4

Wyvetta Bullock

As part of living out its commitment to inclusivity, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America initiated a 3-year Writers Project: Asian, Black, Hispanic and Native American church members. Sixteen participants (four from each community) were selected. They met in Chicago in January to begin skill training and were introduced to ELCA publications. The project is sponsored by the church's Commission for Multicultural Ministries.

Wyvetta Bullock, keynote speaker at the workshop, gave the following words of encouragement and affirmation to the candidates.

Grace and peace to all of you in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

As participants in this project, you've no doubt been given the history of the predecessor church bodies related to writers from Asian, Black, Hispanic and Native American communities. Therefore, you know that the program you are presently involved in has been a long time coming. You are the beginning of a long-awaited dream.

Your involvement in this program is a history-making event in the life of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Now is a fitting moment to con-

sider the spiritual dimension of your being a part of this project. I don't know if those of you who are here for the writers workshop have heard any of the "war stories" from church staff about this past year in the life of the ELCA. Maybe you have some stories of your own. I think many of us staff have asked the question, at least once during the past year, "How did I get my name into this one?"

You who are a part of this writing program may have raised the same question, or at least have wondered if this is really what you should be spending your energy on at this point in your life.

think the lessons for next Sunday can help us think about our current situations. I see life as a journey and there are some staples that we need to take with us on that journey. I choose to name three: Calling, Commitment and Community. Come with me on a journey to explore what God's Word might have to say to us at this point in our lives, in the ELCA.



We understand that we are all called by God in our Baptism and our confession of faith. We share in the priesthood of all believers. We listen to the gospel and proclaim good news with our daily lives. We think about our calling, especially as it relates to our vocation, and to the passion for life that God has placed in each one of us.

It is interesting that when we make references to God's calling or pointing of persons, the Scriptures often declare that God does so *in the womb*, if not before. There is a sense that we are born with all our purpose imbedded into our very spirits. We translate that thought sometimes to say that

someone is naturally gifted to do certain things, or has a natural interest in certain areas. That he or she was born with a passion for a specific ministry.

Sunday's first lesson is the story in which God calls Jeremiah, and appoints him as a prophet to Israel. "Now the word of the Lord came to me saying, 'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations'" (Jeremiah 1:4-5).

There are other records of God's call. Samson was said to be called from the womb. In Isaiah it is written that God called a people who were formed by God "from the womb."

These writings give us the feeling that when we arrive on the planet, we already have a purpose. That our lives have meaning in the plan of God. Our challenge, then, becomes figuring out what that meaning is. Unlike the prophets, we don't get an "in-person" visit from God that clearly delineates our purpose. We generally have to seek for meaning, or vocation, in our lives. But, however we come to understand what our calling is—and that process is a continuous one—we need





to affirm the fact that we do indeed have a calling.

Sunday's second lesson, from First Corinthians 12 and 13, strongly affirms the truth that we are all members of the body of Christ—and that we each have a gift to share.

As we consider our journey in this new church, let us also consider our calling. Are we giving the gift that God placed in us "from the womb"? Perhaps we are not completely satisfied with the environment or circumstances in which we are placed. Never mind—we can still ask, "Are we sharing our interests, talents and passions?" "Is the meaning in our life being touched?"

According to God's Word, it takes *all* of us sharing what we *each* bring in order for the body of Christ to function. We do have a purpose—God saw to that before we were born. But do we sense that purpose at points along the journey? Are we faithful to our calling?



Because we do not always see our purpose, or think that what we do makes any difference, we need to take another staple with us on our journey: commitment. Not just our

commitment to the task, but God's commitment to us. The promises of God go with us.

Commitment helps us stand when the pressures of life make us feel like sitting. Commitment helps us to:

- work for the vision when we are pressed to stop;
- persevere when we would collapse from the strain of misunderstanding;
- bear up under the heavy load of racism and sexism;
- not lose heart when stupidity and greed block our paths;
- continue to breathe when tradition tries to choke us;
- hold our heads high when oppressive powers would force us to bow.

We need commitment on our journey because it will not always be easy to follow our calling among God's people and in the world. Throughout we need to be mindful of God's commitment to us. God's promise is that God will always be in the midst of us and alongside us.

There is an African-American song that says, "I don't feel no tired, I've come too far from where I started from. Nobody told me the road would be easy, but I do believe he brought me this far, leave me."

COMMUNITY

nally, let's consider Community. We need to remember that we are in community. We may not always behave like a community, but we are citizens of this planet together. First Corinthians 13 reminds us that love is the greatest... and that it is experienced in community. Without love it is not possible to journey according to God's plan.

Jeremiah was called to a community. Samson was called to a community. Jesus was sent to the Jewish community. You and I are called in the context of community. We need to remember that we are not alone as we journey, that our journey touches the whole body of Christ.

There are 16 people here tonight who have been called to represent their respective communities in the preparation of some written material for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. That is both an honor and a responsibility. No one can ever speak totally and adequately for our entire racial-ethnic community. There are simply too many diversities among us.

However, there are certain mores and beliefs held in common in our ethnic communities, and we can address those commonalities. Our communities also have histories that must be remembered and honored.

You have been chosen by your community to be a part of this project because your leaders believe you have the integrity and talent to do the best job of representing your community at this time in our church history. Before the leaders

of your community called you, God called you. And the gifts you have to share with the church and the world do have purpose and meaning.

God knew of Samson's calling and life journey before the Philistines, and God called Jeremiah before Israel found out. I also believe the uniting of three Lutheran church bodies in America didn't take God by surprise either.

Whenever God calls, God also equips and empowers. Yes, we have to work and pray, and work and pray, in the process. But the promise of God to be with us, through everything, is always there.

Remember what the Lord said to Jeremiah at his call: "Do not say, 'I am only a youth,' for to all to whom I send you you shall go, and whatever I command you you shall speak. Be not afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you" (1:7).

And now may the peace of God that passes all understanding keep our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen. ■



TRUSTING

Lori J. Ness

Seated across from the door marked "Radiation Therapy—Patient Waiting Room," I was desperately afraid. Facing the reality of walking into the oncology department had been horrifying enough; choosing a seat in the hallway was a last feeble protest against acknowledging that I was a cancer patient.

What if the radiation didn't destroy the cancer and more radical surgery was called for? What if I had to die a slow, painful death?

My unvoiced fears and anxieties tumbled round and round in my mind, like clothes in a dryer. I had tried to prepare myself for my first radiation treatment by memorizing Bible verses which spoke of God's comfort and support in times of trouble, but running through them now failed to bring peace.

A woman came around the corner and took the chair next to mine. She had dark circles under her eyes and a strained smile. For a moment, I thought she was a patient. In her lap she cradled a primary speller and math book. A seven-year-old boy followed and leaned against her knee. He grinned in my direction. He was wearing a Chicago Bears T-shirt and cap. He clutched a large foam rubber hand with the index finger extended sporting the slogan "Bears #1!"

As he hummed and fidgeted, I noticed that the cap partially concealed the loss of the hair on the back of his head. An instructional

video I had seen earlier had mentioned that hair is only lost in a radiated area. Green connect-the-dots marked the back of his naked skull. He had a brain tumor.

His mother glanced at the healing surgical scar on my neck. "Are you just starting therapy?" she asked.

I nodded as her hands massaged the covers of her son's schoolbook. The anguish in her eyes spoke louder than the cheerful tone she adopted. "Brian's almost finished, are you, darling? Next Monday he will start his fifth and last week of radiation. Then he'll have to go to Children's Memorial again for chemotherapy."

Brian grinned and slipped the huge foam rubber hand over his own small fist. He wiggled the index finger at me as he moved closer to me, sensing my distress.

"It doesn't hurt," he said encouragingly. "Only takes a minute. I'll lose some hair but it's okay. Teacher lets me wear my Bears cap in class and the guys are jealous."

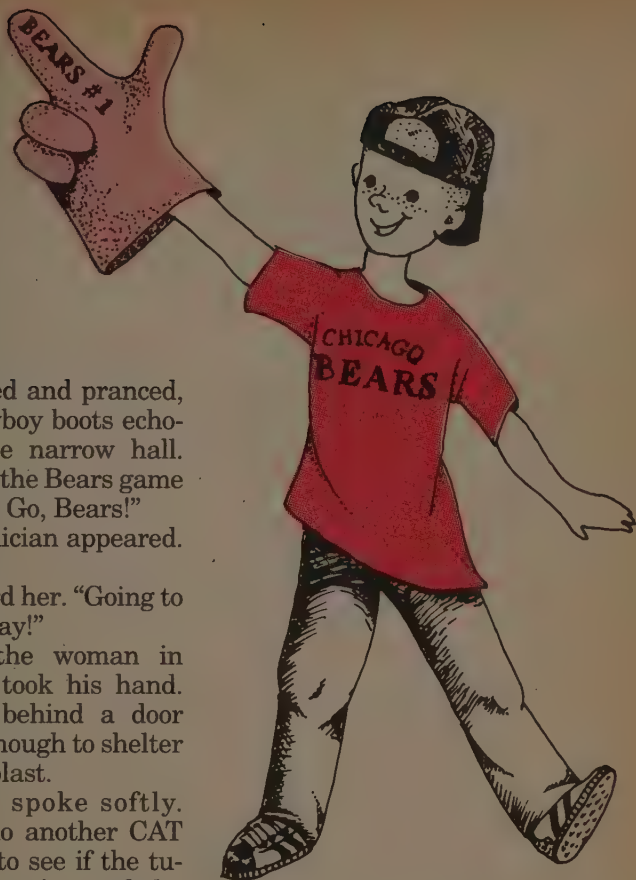
"Your teacher sounds like a smart woman."

"She is. Lets me play football at recess with the other guys, too."

"Not tackle football, I hope!" his mother interjected.

We exchanged sad smiles over his bobbing head.

"I have to go back to the hospital soon," he continued. "And look! I bought me this neat shirt."



ers!" Brian leaped and pranced, heels of his cowboy boots echoing hollowly in the narrow hall. "I's taking me to the Bears game today. Can't wait! Go, Bears!" A radiation technician appeared. "Your turn, Brian."

He skipped toward her. "Going to Bears game Sunday!"

"That's great!" the woman in white said as she took his hand. She disappeared behind a door that looked heavy enough to shelter from an atomic blast.

Brian's mother spoke softly. "You're going to do another CAT scan in two weeks to see if the tumor has shrunk. I can't stand the thought of having him suffer through chemotherapy again." They fell silent until Brian reappeared waving a candy bar.

"Hey, Mom! Early Halloween candy!"

She pointed the enormous finger in his direction. "It didn't hurt, honey. I didn't cry and I got a Mars bar. Maybe there's one left for you." One of his front teeth was slightly wobbled. Probably from playing tackle football on the playground.

Brian and his mother walked away from my life, but not out of my heart. Brian's cheerful grins hid the face of pain and uncertainty. How could I think of my own fears. How could he be so joyful with an amazing ordeal lying ahead?

Huddled on the cold plastic of the chair, an answer came to me. It was so simple—yet it had taken a child to reveal what God was saying in the verses I had memorized. Brian wasn't afraid because he trusted his mother and father to do what was best for him and to take care of him. He knew that they would be with him at the hospital and would never leave him. That gave him his peace.

Could I do less than trust my heavenly Father to take care of me? ■

Lori Ness, Newark, Illinois, is a legal secretary and writer. She is successfully recovering from her cancer, having recently passed her two-year checkup.

Private Fears— Silent Tears

I know how it started . . . but when will it end?
“R.A.”

It started when I was 10 or 11. To think of it makes me physically ill, and tears and anger fill me. At first, the intrigue seduced me. I didn't realize it was wrong until later. I believed in my dad, and certainly he wouldn't do anything to me that was wrong. Yet I wondered why he insisted it had to be kept secret.

Usually it took place in the basement. My mother couldn't go downstairs because of her disability; my brother, much older than I, was usually “out” or working. Sometimes I would surprise my dad and be undressed for him. Now I hate myself for that.

As I grew older, I watched other dads and daughters. When I stayed overnight with friends, I noticed that they didn't seem to have the kind of relationship with their father that I had with mine. I began to realize that what I had was not normal.

But once I knew that it was wrong, I didn't know what to do to stop it. I couldn't tell my mom; she had suffered enough and I couldn't bear the thought of more disappointment shadowing her life. Any relative I might tell would never believe me. I couldn't tell my friends; they would just laugh at me, maybe tell others, and reject me because I was different.

I thought maybe I could tell the pastor, but worried that he would

confront my parents, and then what would I do? My dad had me just where he wanted me—quiet and afraid.

Then my mom died suddenly. At this time my brother was already married with a family of his own. So, at 14, I was alone with my dad and terrified at being in the same house with him.

It no longer happened in the basement. Now he would come in my bedroom in the mornings “wake me up” for school. God, but I hurt. I wanted to cry out, “Stop, please stop.” But I didn't. I lived my own private nightmare. I was sure what my dad would do if I asked him to stop. My fear made sure I never knew the answer. The sex act was not committed, but I felt dirty, used and ashamed. I pretended to be asleep; I even cried, but subtle hints didn't work.

Miraculously, one day his sexual advances stopped. I decided it was because my dad started dating. Or maybe, now that I was older, he feared I would start talking. I don't know why it stopped, but I thank God for that glorious day. That was 18 years ago, but the pain, hurt, guilt and shame are still with me.

I didn't date much during my teenage years. If a boy started talking to me seriously, my dad would stop dating him. In college

it any easier, although I was
thing that not every man was
my dad.

ut some of my fears aside when
t the man I married. At first,
memories of my past didn't
er me much. My husband was
n and gentle, and I had confid-
my secret in him. Then it hap-
d. One night our lovemaking
too fast and the memories came
ing back. I felt used, an object
e taken advantage of. My pri-
e nightmare began again. I
ed building a wall.

ne hugs and kisses were fewer.
spontaneity was gone. I would
up late and go to bed only when
ew my husband was asleep. I
n to crumble and so did our
riage. We began fighting about
e things, but we never dealt
the real issue. I was scared. My
band was scared.

Ie went to counseling, which
helped me get my anger out,
helped my husband to under-
d my feelings. Even with coun-
g, the issues of sex, and even
hing, are still monumental.
etimes the slightest actions or
ghts can trigger the old feel-
of unworthiness in me.

at our marriage is surviving. We
working hard at it and it gets
er with every year. I pray con-
tly for us, asking God to heal
pain, and to help my husband
me to continue growing in
st's love. I know I never would
e made it this far without my
in God; without the knowledge
God loves and cares for me and
heal me.

ask myself, "Will the private
s ever go away? Will the silent
s ever end?" The answer is no,
completely. However, with



God's help and my husband's sup-
port, the pain will lessen and the
memories fade. ■

"R.J." is a pseudonym. Her story is true. The illustrator whose work appears on this page, "Ellie," also is a survivor of incest. Her father and older brother sexually abused her during most of her childhood, beginning before she was three years old and continuing until she was 13. Her art, which is part of her therapy, is helping her discover her identity as a child—an identity the abuse denied her.

Ellie's work has been shown throughout the United States. She says that she hopes that seeing her drawings and hearing of experiences like hers (and like R.J.'s) will help other women who have suffered because of childhood abuse. It has been estimated that about 25% of adult women in the United States were sexually abused as children.—Ed.

Nancy's Gift

Enid Vallis

Nancy and I became best friends two weeks after moved into the big, rather dilapidated house on Dunc Street. She appeared at our door one morning wearing one of her smocked dresses, her braids tied with crisp ribbons, and introduced herself to my mother.

"I'm Nancy Jane MacBeth," she announced to my mother. "I understand you have a little girl my age and I would like to be her friend."

The year was 1941 and we were both five years old.

I had never had a friend before—not a real live one my own age. I was the youngest child in my family by 14 years. My life up to that point had been filled with adult books, toys and two imaginary playmates.

Nancy and I became fast friends immediately. With our vivid imaginations, every day was an adventure. We played House, School, and Office. We loved cut-outs and colored in jumbo coloring books, we made flour paste and cut up our old catalogs to create collages. We baked and decorated mud pies.

We made wonderful plans. We would always be friends. We would marry someday and then our families would be friends. Nancy was going to have twin girls and always dress them in pink and white; I would have twin boys and dress them in red and white. Of course her girls would marry my boys!



**With our vivid
imaginations,
every day
was an
adventure.**

One day we came up with a great idea—every Monday would be Present Day. Every Monday for the rest of our lives we would give each other a present.

My first present to her was a ring with a blue stone. It cost five cents—half my weekly allowance. Oh, the excitement that first day we exchanged small boxes! What would my box hold? A ring? A brooch? A hair clip? But all I found in the box was a flower—a dark purple pansy resting on a bed of cotton batting. "It's just a pansy," I said with disappointment in my voice.

"But it's special," Nancy answered, "See, it has a face and feel, it's as soft as velvet."

I can remember only two other presents I bought for her with my pennies—a hair barrette with bluebirds on it and a "genuine" cricket clicker. I can't recall any of the others. But I can remember what she gave me:

half a newly hatched robin's egg, which we examined through her father's magnifying glass; a nest of pink baby mice discovered in an old crate in the storage shed (we sat, as quiet as mice ourselves, and watched them); an afternoon sitting on her private branch of the huge hickory tree in her backyard. I looked up to see the sun shining in bits and pieces through the leaves and looked down to see the patterns of sun and shade on the grass. The time we listened to the ocean in the cowrie shell in my grandfather's study; and the rainy day we tiptoed into the dark formal dining room in Nancy's house to smell the beeswax candles on the sideboard and then into her Aunt Vera's room to smell the lavender tucked in the white linen sheets in her hope chest.

Eventually I tired of the gift giving. I complained to my mother, "Every week I buy Nancy a nice present from the store and she just gives me stupid things I can't keep." "Are you sure?" prodded my mother. "It sounds to me as if she has given you rather special gifts." "But," I insisted, "they are not real presents." And as a result Nancy and I had a falling out over the whole thing. It was a nasty, name-calling fight of the sort that nine-year-olds excel at. We cancelled the "best friends for life" clause and I went home and ground the robin's egg into a fine blue powder.

When Nancy was seven her family moved away, and after a few attempts to write, we lost touch. But Nancy's gifts remain. Every spring as I stoop to feel the velvet petals of the pansies in my garden, I think of her. I carefully pick up the remnants of robins' eggs, should I find them. And while I no longer climb trees, I never pass under a birch tree without looking up to see the pieces of sunlight playing on the leaves.

My presents to Nancy have long gone, and I doubt if I would be able to remember even one of them. But I remember hers. They bring me pleasure every day.

We all give presents—at birthdays, anniversaries, Christmas . . . and at times it seems we are always buying things for one occasion or another. Perhaps we should give more *gifts*. Try giving an evening walk; a special meal; or a trip back to the old neighborhood. We all have a store of special gifts we can give—gifts that make memories and can be recalled time and time again.

At five, Nancy knew the secret of giving gifts that last a lifetime. By the way, Nancy, thank you. ■



**We all have
our store of
special gifts
we can give.**

THE LORD IS YOUR SHADE

Study Text: Psalm 121

Frederick and Leola Gaiser

Andrew Wyeth's well-known painting *Christina's World* features a woman lying on the ground in the middle of a large, sunny field, facing a distant farmhouse. It is somehow a haunting scene because of its ambiguity. The field is warm and open, but the woman is alone and vulnerable, the house far away. Is she content, or in danger? Is the open field a joy, or a threat?

Now picture the same scene with a large oak tree shading the woman. She is no longer yearning for the house. Shelter has been provided in the midst of the field.

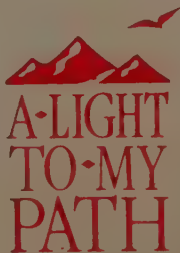
One would not want to remove the tension from Wyeth's painting, of course. It would destroy it. Yet, the real Christina Olson, the subject of the painting, was unable to walk. She might have hoped for shelter if she had found that she was unable to pull herself home from the field.

Psalm 121 speaks to a person who is alone and vulnerable in the Jude-

an wilderness. It, too, is a haunting scene. The sun is already hot in the psalm. Danger is great, and home is far away. But the psalmist knows that shelter exists—even in the midst of the wilderness. The grimace of life has led this person to a difficult place, midway between the starting point and goal. But God is there, too—a mighty oak tree with shade and protection, a home in the desert. "The Lord is your shade. The sun shall not smite you by day. The Lord will keep you going out and your coming in from this time forth and for evermore."

Hearing the Psalm

Psalm 121 is one of a group "Songs of Ascents" (Psalms 121-134). Many believe this to be a collection of psalms used by pilgrims on their way to festival worship at the Temple in Jerusalem. Three times a year Israelites were called up to Jerusalem—for the festival of Booths, Passover, and



2 According to the psalm, what makes God's help reliable? Recall Luther's explanation of the First Article of the Creed in his "Small Catechism." How does that relate to these verses of the psalm?

3 When do we "lift our eyes to the hills" looking for help from God? Reflect on some times in life or situations that are particularly difficult or challenging.

4 In this psalm, God is our helper or helper (Hebrew: *'ezer*). This is the same word used in Genesis 2:18: "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper (*'ezer*) fit for him." What does this suggest about the relationship between the first two humans? Between us and other people?

God as Keeper

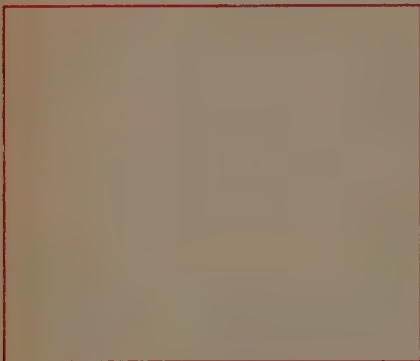
Reread Psalm 121:3-8.

1 Notice the uses of *keeper* in these verses. This term is used many ways in the Old Testament. All of the following references use the same Hebrew word. Quickly check some of the following: Genesis 4:9; 1 Samuel 17:20; 1 Samuel 28:2; 1 Kings 8:23; 2 Kings 23:2; Psalms 97:10; 116:6; 145:20; 146:1; Proverbs 19:16; Isaiah 56:2; Jeremiah 4:17. In what ways could it be offensive to have someone as your *keeper*? What do you think the term means in Psalm 121?

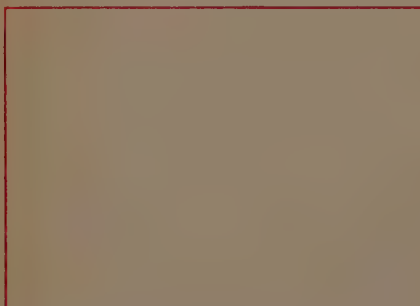
God as Builder

Read Psalm 127:1-2.

1 Human beings strive to build houses, maintain families, establish social systems, and do productive work. This was true already in the Garden of Eden, according to Genesis. Do you think this psalm regards these things as worthwhile? What do these verses mean?



2 People often define themselves by what they do—by their work. Can you think of any problems with this practice? What does verse 2 say to this? What about Exodus 20:8-11?



The Songs of Ascents not only tell us about God; they also tell us about ourselves. They help us understand who we are.

■ Read the following poem by Dietrich Bonhoeffer out loud.

Who Am I?

*Who am I? They often tell me
I stepped from my cell's
confinement
calmly, cheerfully, firmly,
like a Squire from his
country house.*

*Who am I? They also tell me
I bore the days of misfortune
equably, smilingly, proudly,
like one accustomed to win.*

*Am I then really that which
other men tell of?
Or am I only what I myself
know of myself?
Restless and longing and sick
like a bird in a cage,
struggling for breath,
as though hands
were compressing my throat,
yearning for colours,
for flowers,
for the voices of birds,
thirsting for words of kindness
for neighbourliness,
tossing in expectation of
great events,
powerlessly trembling for
friends at an infinite distance
weary and empty at praying,
at thinking, at making,
faint, and ready to say
farewell to it all.*

*Who am I? They mock me,
these lonely questions of mine
Whoever I am, Thou Knowest
O God, I am thine!*

From *Letters and Papers from Prison* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, revised edition. Copyright © 1967, 1971, SCM Press, Ltd. Reprinted by permission of Macmillan Publishing Company, SCM Press, Ltd.

Are Strong

Psalm 125:1-2.

There are many times when, Bonhoeffer, we feel “restless longing and sick.” What is it provided a sense of strength for 20th-century poet and the an-psalmist? How can this work you in your life?

What is the image of strength Psalm uses? How does Psalm 128 relate to this?

We Are Blessed

Read this version of Psalm 128:14 out loud.

“Blessed is everyone who fears the Lord, who walks in God’s ways!

You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands; you shall be happy, and it shall be well with you.

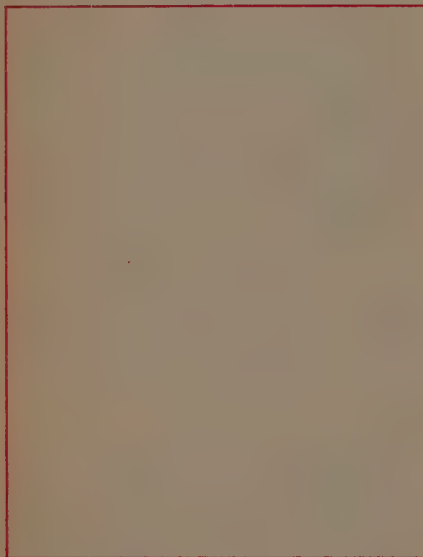
Your beloved will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your children will be like olive shoots around your table.

Thus shall the one be blessed who fears the Lord.”

From *An Inclusive-Language Lectionary: Readings for Year A, B, and C*, copyright © 1983, 1984, 1985, Division of Education and Ministry, National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA, and are used by permission.

1 Psalm 128 speaks of the blessing of family and children. Compare the version above with the Revised Standard Version (RSV). Today we understand that God’s blessing is clearly meant for everyone in the family. What does it mean to be blessed?

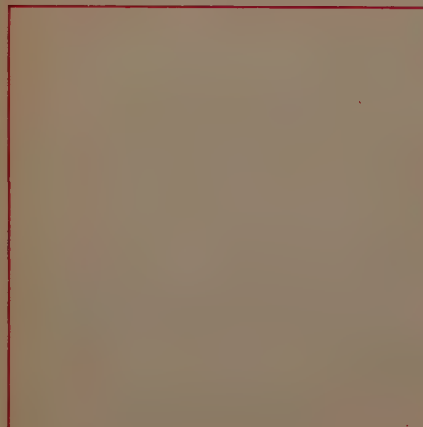
2 Some of us are spouses and parents. All of us are someone's children. Think of how your family situation compared or compares to the description in Psalm 128. Is Psalm 128 realistic? What does it mean?



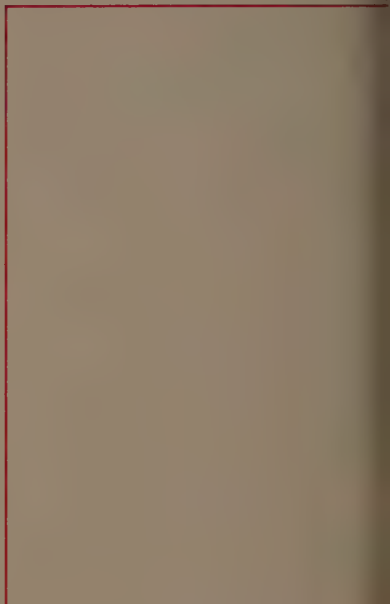
We Are Calm

Read Psalm 131.

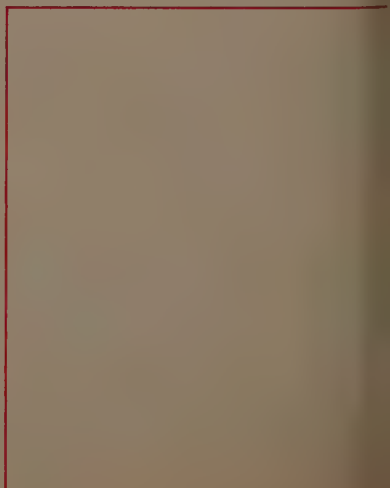
1 Does verse 1 describe resignation or humility? What is the difference?



2 What is the image of God portrayed in verse 2? How does this image work for you, compared, say, to the image of God as a loving father?



3 When is it appropriate and desirable to respond in a calm and quiet way? When might it be inappropriate?



d Psalm 133.

The term *brothers* here (or the phrase “brothers and sisters”) can refer to blood siblings, or it can be used more broadly to refer to humanity. In your experience, which would be more remarkable—siblings living together in family unity, or other people living together in peace and harmony? Which do you think the psalm has in mind?

In Psalm 133 human unity is compared to two very precious commodities in Israel—olive oil, and silver. Why were these so valuable? What do the two images of the psalm (verses 2 and 3) have in common?

3 *There* in verse 3 probably refers to Jerusalem, where God gives the blessing. How does this help us understand where we can find the source for genuine human unity?

In Closing

“I was glad when they said to me, ‘Let us go to the house of the LORD!’” (Psalm 122:1). According to the Songs of Ascents we have studied in this session, Israel encountered a God in its worship who was helper, keeper, deliverer, and builder. The people discovered themselves to be strong, blessed, calm, and unified. It’s no wonder they were glad to go to the Temple! Similar benefits await us in worship. Worship will sustain us along life’s way.

Worship

Sing together "Lord of All Hopefulness" (*LBW* 469).

Looking Ahead

The Fourth of July in the United States is a celebration of national identity. Many of the psalms have a similar concern. Psalm 72 functions something like a national anthem for ancient Israel. It calls for justice and righteousness; it prays for the king; it cares for the poor; it rejoices in the beauty and abundance of the land. Read Psalm 72 in preparation for next month's session. ■

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PAULA BURTNES, MARY JOHNSON AND KEITH SEHNERT

Faith Hardiness and Health

Bruce was deep in thought as he watched the sharp blades of the lawn mower clip the tender stems of grass and send them flying. He felt a familiar sense of despair and helplessness sweep over him, as it had when he was diagnosed with a brain tumor. Even though his radiation treatment had been successful, the fear that the tumor might return continued to haunt him.

"If only I didn't have this cancer," he thought. "I could marry Karen, find my niche in life, reach for the stars if I wanted to . . . but how can I do anything when I don't know what lies around the bend?" "Oh Lord," he said aloud. "Why me?"

With an angry and defiant look he glared up at the clear blue sky. He felt the warm sun on his face and breathed deeply of the new-mown grass. He couldn't help but be filled with the moment. Just then his gaze fell on a water tower in the distance. Printed boldly on its sun-glint barrel were the words "New Hope." There it was, yet another tap on the shoulder from the Lord telling him to "Be still, and

know that I am God."

"Thanks, Lord," Bruce said, needed that! I must get on with it and stop this morose, negative thinking. I know you've got a lot of important things for me to do." The despair and helplessness began to lift, and Bruce felt that he was, once more, in good hands. He knew that in the midst of all the fear, pain, and frustration of his diagnosis, God was there! Somehow, that personal connection helped him push back the horizons of his present life and see beyond who and what he was.

What a blessing are these moments of insight and faith.

As Bruce recognized, life is a journey, a process of becoming, a statement that each of us is challenged to make. But within this freedom we know we are not in complete control. When things happen in spite of our best-laid plans, faith must guide our path. Much is currently written about being responsible for our own health. We hear about "psychological hardiness" where research studies have shown that stress-resistant people tend to have an openness to change, a

Faith is not a crutch or an excuse, but a partner in health.

Faith hardiness allows us to let go of fear.

involvement in whatever they are doing, and an ability to direct their own lives. Life is viewed as a challenge and commitment.

The Christian is also encouraged to view life as challenge and commitment—to be open and involved in all the richness and diversity. The full measure of faith gives us a confidence and a flexibility of life which enables us to trust.

According to the Bible, "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). Faith in God helps us to let go of the burden of total responsibility for all that happens to us and gives us freedom to act with purpose and joy.

Faith is not a crutch or an excuse, but a partner in health. Faith allows us to feel courageous, creative and open to change. It helps us feel protected and involved in life, and provides us with the wisdom to understand the difference between what we can control and what we can't.

Faith also challenges us to take good care of ourselves so that we can be about God's work with health and vigor.

There is a thing called psycho-

logical hardiness, then there must also be faith hardiness. Built into this concept is an attitude of openness, challenge, commitment, loving, and caring. Also built in is an awareness of our inability to control all the areas of our lives—and our need for God's gift of salvation through Jesus Christ.

It is faith hardiness that gives Bruce the courage to rise above the uncertainty in his life and to live fully each moment. Such hardiness can empower us to live healthfully and positively in the middle of pain and problems.

Through faith we can "rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us" (Romans 5:3-5).

Faith hardiness allows us to let go of fear, to understand what is ultimately important in life and to accept the outcomes of life's predicaments. ■

**Faith also challenges us to take
good care of ourselves so that we
can be about God's work with
health and vigor.**

A PARISH NURSE IN YOUR CHURCH

Granger Westberg



Parish nurse Connie Malloy (left) and Ann Gagnon of Minneapolis, Minn., at Rosary Catholic Church.

You may have heard about parish nurses—you may even be a member in the over 100 (and the number is growing) congregations that benefit from the ministry of a parish nurse. You may have read the stories of parish nurses in the October 12, 1987, *Lutheran*. Still, you may wonder, “Just what is a parish nurse?”

THE PARISH NURSE FOSTERS SPIRITUAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH.

These days, when the accent is on whole-person care, the parish nurse helps raise people's awareness of the spiritual dimension of health. This spiritual dimension—how an individual looks at life—is the main ingredient in either keeping people well, or making them sick.

A person's outlook on life is precisely what the Christian church is concerned with every time there is a worship service, a Bible study or a counseling session. A Christian health educator seeks to help people look at life through the eyes of Christ. In Christ there is true health.

THE PARISH NURSE IS A HEALTH EDUCATOR.

The parish nurse helps congregations make the mind-body-spirit connection through seminars, workshops, forums, Sunday school classes and discussion groups where literally scores of subjects dealing with everyday problems are discussed from a wholistic point of view. The parish nurse doesn't do all the teaching, but also calls on experts—from inside and outside the congregation—who have expertise in areas dealing with health and one's belief system.

THE PARISH NURSE IS A PERSONAL HEALTH COUNSELOR.

By taking blood pressures on Sunday mornings before and after the services, the parish nurse gets to know people. Frequently, in the midst of having their blood pressure taken, church members ask to have a personal conversation with the nurse.

Elderly people are often the first to request a personal meeting. T

he parents of children, particularly teenagers, who may be with problems related to sex and alcohol. Others become appointments after the has been in a church long enough for them to decide it is "safe" about personal matters. Nurses are easy to talk with because their personal interests and education are usually a happy combination of the theoretical and the practical. In a sense, they have one foot in the sciences and one in the humanities. They are the catalysts between medicine and religion and can help people make connections between the two. In the same conversation they speak both to a person's physical needs and the related spiritual needs.

PARISH NURSE IS AN MENTOR OF VOLUNTEERS.

Within a short time of the parish nurse's arrival, it becomes clear there are more requests for help than can be handled. Then

the nurse seeks out those church members who have gifts as warm, friendly, spiritually mature people, and gives them the training needed to help with this ministry.

In many churches the nurse is also a volunteer and may be able to give only about four hours a week. In such cases the nurse is especially dependent upon other lay people to help. But the same is also true in larger churches, where the parish nurse may be employed by the congregation.

Those churches with "Shepherding," "Befrienders," and "Stephen" ministries are particularly helpful to the parish nurse, as they have had special training to develop listening skills. In these cases, the nurse also acts as continuing mentor when the volunteers return from house calls and need to discuss their experiences.

THE PARISH NURSE RELATES TO THE MEDICAL COMMUNITY.

When beginning work in a local



nurse Linda Nelson with three of the children she teaches at Messiah Lutheran Church, Minneapolis. The programs pictured on these pages receive support from Fairview Foundation in Minneapolis.

congregation, the parish nurse makes a point of visiting all the health-related institutions in that community. He or she becomes well-acquainted with retirement homes, nursing homes, hospitals, visiting-nurse programs and home health-care resources. The parish nurse is personally known by many nurses, doctors, psychologists, and social workers.

As a knowledgeable medical person, the parish nurse acts on behalf of the many people in a congregation who may be baffled by the complexity of the U.S. health system. She often opens the door to available human services that most people are not aware of. The nurse has close ties with both the congregation and the medical community.

THE PARISH NURSE BUILDS BRIDGES BETWEEN FAITH AND HEALTH.

This is no easy task in a time when, for many, science has become a kind of religion that can overshadow the Christian faith. Science, pure science, for all its wonderful gifts to our age, and contributions to the care of our health, needs to be seen for what it is—a way of looking at our complex world that doesn't take God into account.



Annette Langdon takes Ed Rieflin's blood pressure at Calvary Lutheran Church, Golden Valley, Minn.

But there is a new day dawning among many leaders of medicine. As medicine matures, it is mellowing and taking steps to understand that aspect of humankind which is unique among all animals—spirituality.

Parish nurses, who are actually “ministers of health,” can help bridge the gap that often exists between science and religion. By giving their attention to a whole-person approach to illness and health, parish nurses are in a special position to advance our understanding of how faith and health are joined together. ■

For further information about parish nurses contact:

National Parish Nurse Resource Center
Lutheran General Hospital
1875 Dempster Street
Park Ridge, IL 60068



LWT:

Outside the Circle

Dorothy Chapman

*Thanks to LWT, I
finally do feel like a
woman of the ELCA.*

"Thank you, Marcia Erickson!" I
finished reading the plastic
cup article in the February is-
sue of Lutheran Woman Today. As
I tucked the magazine into my
bag, I reflected a bit on what LWT
meant to me in its first year of
publication.

Christine Carlson's study of Mark
became the basis for my personal
study. Stories and articles
inspired and challenged me,
forced me to take inventory of
my own beliefs and practices and,
finally, to make changes. But
most important, I've begun to think
of myself as a part of the large, vital
community that comprises the Women of
the Evangelical Lutheran Church
in America—a new identity for me.
When I joined the Lutheran
Church, I declined an invitation to
join a women's circle. My concept of
a women's group was drawn heavily
from my childhood memories of the
Lutheran Aid Society in the funda-
mental church my family attend-
ed there, the role of women was

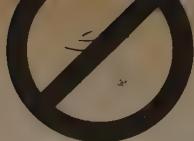
rigidly and narrowly defined. The
meeting usually included a musical
rendition by one or more of the
members and a sermon delivered
by a man—generally the pastor—
focusing on what he perceived to be
the needs of the group and his as-
pirations for it.

The creative challenge for a
member of that group amounted to
stretching her depression budget
enough to provide suitable refresh-
ments when it was her turn to en-
tertain. With this as my referent
(and a paucity of good recipes),
there was little motivation to join a
circle.

Years later, when I was asked to
serve on an advisory board for the
new women's magazine in the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in
America, my perceptions began to
change. In preparation for the task,
I set about acquainting myself with
Scope and *Lutheran Women*, which,
until then, I hadn't known existed.

As I pored through these maga-
zines, I developed a growing respect
for both the publications and the or-
ganizations they represented.
Molding a new publication that
would be new, yet seem familiar
and comfortable to both audiences,
became symbolic for me of what the
new church was about.

Dialogue
for
Agricultural Women



BIBLE STUDY

The Tears
of the Church

Bible Basis: Mark 14:53-72
Study Text: Mark 16:7-11

WHEN
E

IN THE
DIVINE
IMAGE

A Call to Ban
the

EMPOWERED
BY THE
HOLY SPIRIT

SPIRIT

WOMEN SPEAK

Putting Down
Church Roots

A P
Mus
H



MISSION:

Community

Gifted, a new series for Women of the ELCA

WOMEN OF THE ELCA

CALLED

TO

DISCIPLESHIP

SPACE & TIME
FOR
SP

Naturally, I was excited when the first issue of LWT arrived in the mail. Less predictable was my continuing and deepening interest in it long after the release of the first three issues in which I'd had a part.

Much of my enjoyment comes from the letters to the editor—a forum that developed among the readers as they took up discussion of what they liked and didn't like, what was meaningful to them and what wasn't—and why. This magazine clearly could accommodate different views and various opinions, an essential quality if its readers were to grow in love and understanding of each other—and to "grow in faith and mission."

As I thought about my own experience with LWT, I wondered how many Lutheran women have yet to discover their magazine. Are women's organizations using it as

an outreach and link to the women in the congregation who are not circle participants? Have those of us who enjoy it on our own found ways to use LWT as a personal witness? How can we, as groups and as individuals, broaden the ministry of LWT?

The way that most readily comes to mind is to make LWT available to every woman in the congregation. Or, perhaps LWT could be offered to new women in the congregation as a way of introducing them to Women of the ELCA.

Another consideration is to give subscriptions to young women at the time of their confirmation graduation. You can select the occasion that best fits your own church culture and let it be a kind of "rite of passage" into the adult society of the church.

Another opportunity lies with

IN
GLOBAL
SERVANTHOOD
Learning to Pray

STEWARDSHIP
OF THE
APPLE

YOU
SISTER?

ng women who are away from
church for a time—in the ser-
e, perhaps, or continuing their
ocation. Many articles offer the
nsel they may be seeking as they
e lifetime choices and decisions.
st important, it serves as a re-
nder to them of their spiritual
ts and the caring support of their

home congregation.

Then there are our older friends in retirement or nursing homes. For them, LWT can be an event to anticipate each month, particularly if it's hand-delivered as part of a visit. The fact that LWT is available in big print, audiotape and braille versions can make it a valuable resource for women with visual impairments.

Providing copies in waiting rooms of doctor's offices, clinics, hospitals, and beauty parlors—or wherever women spend time waiting—is another rich opportunity for witness. Your lunchroom at work, too, is a place where people often pick up a magazine for coffee-break reading.

There is no dearth of opportunity, but, like all witnessing, it requires effort and imagination. Your outreach may glean members for your circle. Even if it doesn't, it may do for others what it has for me. Though my schedule still prevents me from regularly attending a circle, thanks to LWT, I really do feel like a Woman of the ELCA. And as such, I can support the organization—with my prayers, my personal witnessing and my monthly contributions. ■

Waiting Room Ministry

If your congregational unit wants to use LWT in its evangelism, why not try Waiting Room Ministry? It's a new program in which congregational units place copies of LWT in selected locations such as doctor's offices and beauty shops, with appropriate follow-up. For information on how to become involved in Waiting Room Ministry, contact Lutheran Woman Today Promotion, Box 1209, Minneapolis, MN, 55440; phone: 1-800-328-4648, or, in Minnesota, 1-800-752-8153. Also, see "Waiting Room Ministry" in the March 1989 LWT, pages 42-43.—ED

The Listening Post

Linda Freeman



Picture a table covered in homespun or calico, with mounds of unshelled roasted peanuts spilled across the top. A few chairs are placed randomly. A hand-lettered sign in brown ink on brown paper proclaims this THE LISTENING POST.

Add a bowl of fruit, a pot of flowers and some smiling volunteers and you'll have all the ingredients necessary to create a homey, safe atmosphere—a place where people can come to express themselves, share ideas and talk out solutions to their problems.

Called a “profoundly simple idea” by a Denver journalist, a Listening Post is not a counseling center, but a place where listener and listenee meet as equals to experience good communication. Most Posts are located near college campuses and are staffed by one male and one female volunteer. Visitors to the Post are most often students who seem to relate best to those who are gray of head and long of tooth, so many of the volunteers are from the “grandparent” generation.

Mabel Barth had worked her way

from secretarial to coordinator of public relations at a major heavy-industrial chemical firm when, at midlife, she decided to pursue higher education. “Those delayed college years were wonderful!” Barth calls. “But sometimes I just long for a place and a person to understand the weariness, or the apprehension about a research paper, the excitement about some achievement.”

That longing provided Barth with the impetus for establishing the first Listening Post, under an attention-getting red-and-white striped canopy in downtown Denver, Colorado, in 1979. “I was amazed by the numbers who came,” says Barth, “and by their obvious need to communicate. That’s what I knew I was onto something good.”

Her ideas have sparked the interest of others, and today there are more than 50 Posts located in 15 states throughout the United States—from California to Virginia, from Wyoming to Florida. Each Post operates independently and is staffed in a way that suits the volunteers.

Most Posts are located near a

campus because, says Barth, "I
y from personal experience
college students are some of
loneliest people in all the
."

the afternoon on the Western
ning College campus a listener
ed a young girl running out of
nearby student center. Agita-
er eyes were wide, her cheeks
ed and she was breathing in
ous gasps.

first she rushed past me," the
ner explains. "Then she
led around, motioned toward
surroundings and demanded,
t is this?"

stening Post," I replied, "a
place to come to talk about
anything—anything you'd

ortunately there were few peo-
around that day so she and I sat
and we talked for nearly two
s about her marriage, her
e and young children, her prob-
at school. Then she stood up
otly and with no warning said,
'a go,' and was gone.

was relieved when she re-
ed a few days later. 'You know,'
onfided, 'I was really down the
day. I couldn't see any reason
ope or go on. I was actually
ing about going home and
ing my head in the oven.'

e gave a little self-realizing
n. 'You didn't really tell me
to do, but it sure helped to
someone to unload on. Some-
I got my perspective back.' "

eractions at a Post can run the
ut of human interests from
d politics to the latest hits in
videos. Lighthearted banter,
g and monthly birthday par-
are as much a part of a Listen-



Mabel Barth (right), founder of the first Listening Post in Denver.



Tina, a student, wife and mother of a one-year-old son, is a frequent visitor to the Denver Listening Post.



Mabel listens carefully to the words of each visitor.

ing Post as the more serious discussions.

Believing, as someone once said, that it is possible "to listen a person's soul into existence," volunteers sharpen their listening skills by attending a series of training sessions which emphasize ways to avoid an I'm-wiser-than-you attitude. They learn how to give non-judgmental responses and help visitors with problems examine feelings, think logically, perceive alternatives and arrive at well-considered decisions.

Barth emphasizes that the volunteers are not advice-givers; rather they show empathy and a willingness to listen and help as they can. Another day at another Post, for example, a young man was upset because he had used his money unwisely. His car was broken down and he couldn't pay the rent. The sympathetic listener heard him out. Then together the

two compiled a list of people who might be able to help. They made a time line and charted steps to be taken on specific dates.

The listener explained how to write an IOU, and soon the student was contributing his own positive suggestions. He was smiling when he returned several days later to report that he'd not only acted on their plan, but had also moved to less-expensive quarters. His anger was getting under control once again.

Catherine de Hueck Doherty has said that "with the art of listening comes the gift of healing, because listening to your brothers or sisters until they have said the last words in their heart is healing and consoling." Mabel Barth sums up the philosophy behind the Listening Post when she says, "Good communication is one of our greatest needs. And listening," she adds softly, "is a way of giving." ■

Does the idea of establishing a Listening Post appeal to you? To help interested groups get started, Barth has prepared an 80-page, loose-leaf handbook. It is written in the warm style of a personal letter to a friend and offers invaluable ideas based on Barth's experience and the experiences of others. It is available for \$27.50, plus \$2.50 postage from The Listening Post, 3100 Cherry Creek South Drive, Apartment 1507, Denver, CO, 80209.

Mabel Barth feels the concept of the Listening Post would work equally well in a hospital waiting room, a nursing home, a shopping mall or a busy airport. She is just waiting for someone to recognize the need and organize such an effort. Maybe that someone is you.

Pockets Full of Peanuts

Virginia Broderius

el sends me away with my
ts full of peanuts," said Jerry,
mber of Lutheran Campus
try at Auraria Campus in
er. Auraria is an urban, all-
uter campus with 32,000 stu-
and 1500 faculty and staff. It
o the home of an unique ex-
ent in ministry—the Auraria
aith Ministry Team.

s team is a covenanted min-
among eight denominations,
ling Lutheran, with a com-
ent to a model of ministry that
es out to the community in an
nonaggressive manner, help-
people grow and develop their
ense of the spiritual. The Lis-
g Post is one form Interfaith
try takes on this diverse cam-

ry is only one of many Luther-
students at Auraria who benefit
the "grandmotherly ministry"
receive at the Listening Post
nver. Through worship, Bible
issue forums, and friendship
service activities, Lutheran
try helps Jerry and others (in-
g faculty, staff, and adminis-
s) take that image of grand-
erly, godlike love and use it in
daily struggles to lead a faith-
life.

ckets full of peanuts" is, in a
ense, a fine symbol of the gos-
d conjures up the "mission vi-
of Lutheran Campus Ministry

at Auraria, which states, "We pro-
claim the Word of God daily
through our lives and relation-
ships." The image gives practical
shape to the purpose of Auraria In-
terfaith Ministry: "We offer helping
hands and caring hearts to the en-
tire Auraria campus community."

"Pockets full of peanuts" is not
really new. Women have always
performed such ministries. They
still do. In their kitchens, gardens
and nurseries, in their cockpits,
board rooms and pulpits, women
give shape and substance to God's
love.

What Mabel has done is give val-
ue to many women's ministries and
to build those skills into a new and
different setting. She didn't wait
around for groups of authorities to
spend years deciding whether her
God-given skills and gifts were a
"valid" ministry or not. She simply
offers "pockets full of peanuts." ■

*The Rev. Virginia Broderius has
served Lutheran Campus Ministry
at Auraria in Denver, Colorado,
since 1984. She has been a parish
pastor and teacher and leads work-
shops on theology and spirituality
in women's lives.*

FOREMOTHERS OF FAITH

Amanda Berry Smith

L. DeAne Lagerquist



***Her words and example
brought the gospel to
many people and
helped others receive
a deepened experience
of holiness.***

Letters tell the story in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*: Celie's letters to God, her letters to her sister Nettie, a missionary in Africa, and Nettie's letters from Africa. Although Nettie is fictional, over a hundred Black American Christians did go to Africa as missionaries in the late 1800s.

Among them was Amanda Berry Smith. In *An Autobiography: The Story of the Lord's Dealings with Mrs. Amanda Smith the Colored Evangelist*, she recorded her activities there. A century later, her book can serve as a letter to us, her sisters in Christ, about her life and work.

Smith was born into slavery in

1837. When mistress died, she, her mother, and the rest of the children were freed into her father's care. The family moved to Pennsylvania, where they maintained a station on the Underground Railroad. You

Amanda took on domestic work to support herself.

Her religious instruction began early in her home and continued at the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) in York, Pennsylvania. At 16 she experienced a deepening of faith, which she called "conversion." Her account, the most of her autobiography, conveys the immediacy of her prayer and her close relationship to God.

the next decade and a half, nurtured that relationship by constant worship, Bible study, and prayer. She married twice and had several children. Her first husband did not return from the Civil War; he died in 1869. Her daughter, Mazie, was the only child who survived infancy.

Those years Smith lived in New York and worked as a washerwoman. Though the work was exhausting, she took time to meditate and pray. She explained, "... for I found that it was not necessary to be alone or be isolated away in some place of retirement to have communion with Jesus; but, though your hands are employed in doing your business, it is no bar to the communion with Jesus. I sat many times over my wash-tub and my sewing table, and while making my bed and sweeping my house and washing my dishes, I have had some of the richest blessings."

Amanda Berry Smith took part in the services of several Christian churches. Among them were meetings held by advocates of "Holiness" or sanctification, a movement which completes conversion. Along with this blessing of purity, she used the words "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28) took on special meaning for her.

Her message became even clearer. Smith received a spiritual calling to preach in 1870. The AME Church did not ordain women, but her gifts for preaching were recognized. Relying on God for her strength, Smith traveled from one meeting to another and held services in churches throughout the eastern states.

Both Black and White listeners heard Smith. She was, however, aware of continued prejudice against her race and was careful not to give "unnecessary offense." Many benefited from her message and were converted by her preaching and singing.

After several years of successful ministry, Smith went to the British Isles and India to continue her evangelism and advocacy for temperance. In 1881 she arrived in West Africa.

For eight years, Smith worked as an evangelist there among residents and North American immigrants in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Her heart went out especially to poorly prepared immigrant women and native African women, with their heavy life burdens. What she saw reinforced her commitment to temperance and education.

When God called her back to the United States, she moved to Chicago. In nearby Harvey she set up an orphanage for Black children. It operated as the Amanda Smith Industrial School for Girls for a few years after her death in 1915.

Throughout her life and ministry, Amanda Berry Smith was in close communion with Jesus via prayer. Her work was God's work.

Despite obvious barriers imposed by the society of the day, Smith remained convinced that God makes all people equal. Her friendships and activities crossed many lines, making the way easier for those who came after her. She brought the gospel to many people and helped others receive a deepened experience of holiness. ■

Dr. Lagerquist is an assistant professor of religion at St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota.

a *different* kind of Bible study

Gloria Bauer Ishida

Maria Teresa Porcile, a lay Roman Catholic theologian and teacher in Montevideo, Uruguay, believes in a different type of Bible study. Traditional Bible studies analyze texts for deeper meaning; Porcile encourages involvement in studies that are "evocations of the revealed Word."

Porcile will serve as Bible study leader at each of three Global Mission Events (GME) of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to be held this July. The new style of Bible study experience happens, she says, "when we recognize an echo of some passage in scripture in an occurrence or event of everyday life . . . the one evokes the other as though calling on it for help in discerning the deeper meaning of the event or current life."

Porcile has written of one such experience involving a project in Montevideo that worked for contact and solidarity between wealthy people in a middle-class parish and residents in a shantytown.

One day a woman from the middle-class parish felt particularly un-

comfortable, and "felt in some definite way responsible for the fact that there was no water in the slum." She asked her husband, a public works engineer, if it would be possible to provide water for the area.



Two weeks later the area had water. It hadn't been difficult, after all, because there was an unseen complication: the city had charged for laying the water pipes. A collection was taken up in the middle-class parish, and soon the expenses were paid. Having water in the shantytown so transformed the lives of the residents

that part of town.

Porcile asks poignantly, "How can we fail to recognize in this story from a shantytown in a modern Latin American city the deep meaning of water as a symbol of life? This echoes Jesus' meeting at the well with the woman of Samaria. It evokes the biblical passage; it does not try to apply it or transplant it to another culture." (The Bible study from which this story comes can be read in the Number 2 (M

1989 GLOBAL MISSION EVENTS

- **July 6-9** Muhlenberg College, Allentown, Penn.
- **July 13-16** Concordia College, Moorhead, Minn.
- **July 20-23** Texas Lutheran College, Seguin, Texas

For more information and registration forms, write to:

Global Mission Events
ELCA Division for Global Mission
8765 W. Higgins Road
Chicago, IL 60631.

issue of *World Encounter*.)
The experience depicts "what can
happen when a person's heart and
conscience awaken to the reality of
God in a particular situation
and does so with a 'new' sense of
responsibility." This is the kind of
experience that often happens to
people at Global Mission Events.

Porcile writes that the force that
drove her on her journey, from learn-
ing Hebrew as a teen to teaching
and developing ecumenical rela-
tions today, was "none other than
the spirit of God. It was God," she
said, "who softly and insistently be-
came manifest in innumerable sit-
uations, and to whom I wanted to
be faithful in my answer."

Those who attend Global Mission
Events will learn more of Porcile's
experiences. (See box on this page for
dates and locations.) The GME pro-
gram includes worship, music, a
banquet, films and videos, hour-
long "Global University" sessions
and in-depth mission educa-
tion. Participants may choose from
a variety of topics presented by
respected persons involved in
the church's mission inside and outside
the United States. Focus sessions,

also part of the Global University,
will allow participants to examine
areas such as "The Global Mission
Advocate in the Congregation,"
"Witness and Evangelism," and
"Peace with Justice Advocacy."

Keynote speaker for the events
will be Peri Rasolondraibe, a pro-
fessor of the Malagasy Lutheran
Church and a visiting professor at
Luther Northwestern Theological
Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota.

While Global Mission Events are
meant for all people—men, women
and children—it's been women who
have attended GMEs in large num-
bers in the past. Maria Teresa Por-
cile, with her involvement in inter-
national women's concerns, should
have a special message for women
attending the GMEs. Also, women
can meet with Women of the ELCA
staff and attend Global University
sessions that focus on Women of the
ELCA's mission areas. ■

*Gloria Bauer Ishida coordinates
Global Mission Events for the
ELCA Division for Global Mission.
She is also synodical chair of the
Mission: Community Committee for
the Metropolitan Chicago Women of
the ELCA.*

MISSION:

Action

The Mission: Action program area of Women of the ELCA seeks to help women translate their faith into action. By demonstrating their faith through service, women of the church can strengthen the connection between their spiritual beliefs and daily life. As Christians, we recognize that part of our covenant with God through Baptism is to serve all people and follow Jesus' example of striving for the equality of all humankind.

In doing so we must work with, not in opposition to, secular organizations that are dedicated to social change. To this end, Mary Bridges, peace with justice coordinator for the Missouri-Kansas Synodical Women's Organization, attended the Women's Agenda Conference in early 1989.

The meeting, held in Kansas City, Missouri, was organized by Business and Professional Women/USA. More than 11,000 women from 61 organizations attended. Under the theme "Workforce 2000," the conference encouraged discussion and brainstorming on a wide range of topics, including: the changing workplace and inequities in employment for women, care of children and the elderly, housing,

job training, and a variety of economic issues. The ideas, conclusions, and opinions generated by conference attendees are scheduled to be presented to Congress and President Bush.

Attending the conference helped Mary Bridges realize what Mission: Action is all about: "I felt I was at the workshop to say, 'I represent the church, and there are people in the church who care deeply about issues confronting today's society.' She also commented, "On themes repeated over and over was education. We must begin to educate ourselves, our members, our communities about the problems of society. Only after we have educated ourselves can we effectively work to make those positive changes in society."

Women of the ELCA are motivated and guided into action through the work of the Holy Spirit. This conference, and others like it, demonstrate the value of working with others who share common goals, and encourage the linking of churches and local and national organizations involved with social concerns.

—Jennifer Weiss

*... engage in ministry and action, and
promote healing and wholeness
in the church, the society, and the world.*

MISSION:

Community

elling is an intricate part of on: Community's relation- Eyes sparkle or water, brows wrinkle and hearts leap or depending on the content of ries and the closeness of our nships.

en we tell the stories of where erings go, and where they are d, we enlarge our under- ing of community, and give rt to it.

en, for example, Casselia rt, an attorney in Liberia, s of an airplane ministry in untry, we feel the ache of her d the beat of her heart.

ny of these places (served by urch in Liberia) do not have motor roads, or they hardly roads at all because most of 'roads' are foot paths. The come in with medical per- and take patients to the hos- That plane has saved so many

also use the plane to reach closer to preaching points in- of journeying all by foot.

ce our bishop invited women with him to a newly estab- congregation. They went by urch's Land Rover as far as could go, then walked six They arrived at nine o'clock at, exhausted but not discour- because the villagers met

them, and they danced their way into the village.

"The next time we took a trip there, we *flew* into the village. The men, women and children had prepared the air strip."

As a part of the community of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, each year Women of the ELCA provides a gift to the church. In 1988 it was \$1.25 million, \$500,000 of which went to support global community through these specific ministries:

Airplane ministry, Liberia

Advocacy, Namibia

Aid to the church in El Salvador

Boarding home for children,

India

ELCA World Hunger

Evangelism, youth and women, Cameroon

Evangelical outreach, Tanzania

Library books, Ghana

Lutheran Theological Seminary, Hong Kong

Rural outreach, Colombia

Student scholarships, Liberia

Women's evangelistic teams, India

Youth, Papua New Guinea

Being in community means both hearing the stories and responding. In 1989, Women of the ELCA will increase its gift to the church by \$25,000.

—Bonnie Belasic

... support one another in our callings ...

MISSION:

Growth

Why, in 1989, are there two Bible studies in LWT? Why are there two resource books and leader guides?

These questions about the 1989 Bible studies in LWT can best be answered by considering the transitional period in which they were developed.

Bible studies take approximately 16 months to develop. A transitional planning team, operating during the formation of Women of the ELCA, coordinated the development of the 1988 Bible study in LWT on the gospel of Mark and the current eight-session study on Psalms, among other resources.

Once Women of the ELCA staff came on board, there was renewed commitment to offering a 12-month Bible study, one session in every LWT issue. This meant that a four-month complementary study needed to be developed rather quickly, to follow the Psalms study. (*A Light to My Path: A Study of the Gospel of John*, then, is actually the first Bible study under the full direction of Women of the ELCA staff.)

Based on direction from predecessor women's groups, the transitional team did not plan for a separate resource book to accompany LWT Bible studies. During the first months of the Mark Bible study,

however, many, many requests were received to add a resource book.

In response, a resource book for the Psalms study was produced. This resource book had to be prepared while the study of John was being written, making it impossible for the two resources to be combined.

Some women may find purchasing two resource books and leader guides a financial hardship. In this is a one-time-only situation, perhaps circles could help women by purchasing, from unit funds, resource books and a leader guide to share.

The 1990 Bible study, *Commissions on Your Journey: Studying Biblical Women*, will be offered in three four-month modules for flexibility, but one leader guide and one resource book will cover all modules.

God's steadfast love is enough for us to travel this transitional road in 1989. We invite you to join with the psalmist in praying: "O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever" (Psalm 107:1).

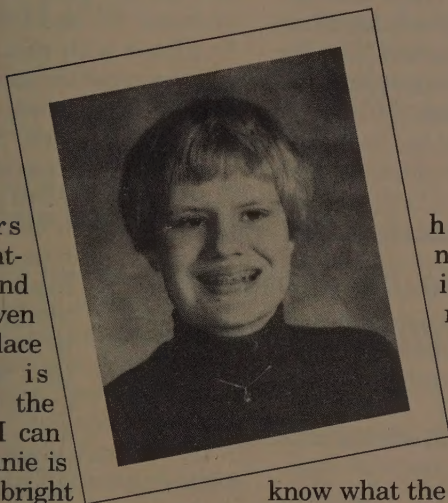
—Ivis LaRiviere-Mesa

... grow in faith, affirm our gifts ...

Stephanie

Howard W. Hinkeldey

Stephanie Elin, the daughter of Susan and Ron Elin of Rockville, Maryland, died of natural causes in November 1987. A mentally retarded youngster, Stephanie brought much joy to those around her, as this funeral sermon by her pastor underscores.



16 years
anie bright-
ur lives, and
tain heaven
righter place
se she is
Perhaps the
ay that I can
e Stephanie is
she was a bright
in the most fundamental
of the word *bright*.

htness means "shining," it
"radiant." Even as the sun
through the figure of Christ
church window, so light came
h her to all of us. We are the
er because of her. Stephanie
uted so much to our well-
and sense of community. Life
measured by its duration, but
donation. And she gave us

like to reflect briefly on four
in Stephanie's life. First, her
n. You remember, Sue and
s parents you brought her
o the font on St. Stephen's
ecember 26th. You probably
because then grandparents
be here over the Christmas

holidays. But her
name was Stephan-
ie—and she was
named for St. Ste-
phen.

Stephen, as you
know, was a mar-
tyr. But many of
us perhaps don't

know what the word *martyr* meant
in its original sense: not one who
dies for the faith, but one who wit-
nesses for the faith, who declares
the faith. One through whom the
faith can be seen by others, one who
is a light. Stephanie was named for
Stephen, Stephen the witness.
We're all to be witnesses. Would
that more of us could be witnesses
as Stephanie was—with all her in-
nocence, warmth and concern.

Second, her worship life. Ste-
phanie was a regular worshiper
here at St. John's. Partly we can at-
tribute that to the fact that, like a
preacher's kid, she had to be here
because Sue was always involved in
choir, and Stephanie needed to sit
down in the front pews when she
couldn't sit next to her mother. But
Stephanie loved this church and

worship. For a long time she was impressed by the "movement parts" of the service, especially the benediction with the sign of the cross. She practiced making the sign of the cross and memorized the words of the benediction.


She told me later, "I know how to do that."

I said, "That is marvelous. Sometime I'm going to have you do that." So she and I conspired together, and we didn't tell anyone. On the 35th anniversary of my ordination, I sat in the pew as Pastor Weber led


straight-forward terms, as she and I did. Actually faith is not that complicated when we stop to think about it. All she needed to know was that God loved her, that God had created her, and that in Jesus Christ she had forgiveness of her sins and assurance of everlasting life. And she knew that.

What Stephanie liked most was to color, so I gave her lots of pictures of Jesus' life and ministry, especially scenes with children. She knew that he cared for people with special needs. She colored, and she colored

well. She colored the lives of all of us at John's. She colored with strong hues of blue, the blue of true blue faith. She brought out the color in everyone. I'm glad that her mother and grandmother are dressed in bright clothes today. Stephanie would have liked that.



*Would that more
of us could be witnesses
as Stephanie was—
with all her innocence,
warmth and concern.*



the service. At the end he said, "Now it's your pastor's privilege to bless the congregation and say the benediction." And when I did, I reminded all of you that a pastor never works alone. A pastor needs helpers and to symbolize that, I announced I had a helper, who would help pronounce the benediction.

And so Stephanie came forward. Along with me she spoke the words of blessing to you; *she* blessed you.

Third, her catechetical instruction. It was the only time in my 38 years of ministry that I had the marvelous privilege of having one-on-one instruction with anyone.

We decided to talk about Jesus. It would do us all good to simplify our faith, and talk in very clear,

Last, her confirmation—about a year and a half ago. It was the confirmation class that I was privileged to confirm before I retired a last year, last things are sometimes more significant. Upon confirming Stephanie, a lot went through my mind, as it does for me with every youngster. It's an emotional moment when you place your hand on the head of a 15-year-old. You realize all that may be ahead for the child, and you think of all that hope and dream for the child, all the parents are hoping and praying for. And then you say the words of God's blessing upon the child.

As Stephanie affirmed her baptism, I knew—and the congregation knew—there were particular

ong with
e she spoke
e words of
essing to you;
e blessed you.

es ahead of her, and that we
led to be especially supportive
er.

e also knew how much *she* of-
d us. Stephanie elicited from us
. She made this congregation be
s best when she was here. I pray
will remember her and still be
ur best now that she is perform-
the same bright function for all
e around our Father in heaven.

r Stephanie,
e Lord bless you
keep you.
e Lord make his face
e upon you, and be
ious unto you.
e Lord lift up his
ntenance upon you,
give you peace.
en. ■

Rev. Howard W. Hinkeldey is
retired from St. John Lutheran
rch, but carries on a number of
ects, several for the Metropoli-
Washington Synod of the
A.—ED.

POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT

*Executive Director,
Women of the ELCA*

At its April meeting, the church-
wide board of Women of the Evan-
gelical Lutheran Church in Ameri-
ca interviewed candidates for the
office of executive director, and
“elected not to elect” a person to fill
the position. Therefore, the Women
of the ELCA is reopening the can-
didacy process and will be accepting
applications and nominations for
this position.

Candidates must have demon-
strated leadership, organizational
and programmatic skills, with the
ability to work interdependently
within the ELCA. For application
and further information, please
contact:

A. C. Stein
ELCA Office for Personnel
8765 West Higgins Road
Chicago, IL 60631
phone (312) 380-2981

Applications and nominations close
June 30, 1989.





Affirmation of Individual Worth

*Recognizing that each woman
is created in God's image
and uses her varied gifts
in diverse ministries,
this community of women
shall affirm in its life and work
the worth of each woman.*

Principles of Women of the ELCA,
Constitution and Bylaws

This issue is the second in a series
focusing on the constitutional principles
of Women of the ELCA.

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